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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 ACDA-05 EA-06 IO-10 /081 W
---------- 012844
R 150837Z APR 75
FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9889
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION BERLIN
EUCOM (POLAD)
USAFE (POLAD)
USAREUR (POLAD)

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GW
SUBJECT: NEW LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH HESSEN SPD

REF: FRANKFURTS 8075, DECEMBER 9, 1974

1. SUMMARY: WITH STRONG SUPPORT FROM THE LEFTISTS AND THE ADVANTAGE OF A MORE DYNAMIC AND POPULAR PERSONALITY, FRANKFURT LORD MAYOR RUDI ARNDT DEFEATED HESSEN LABOR MINISTER HORST SCHMIDT FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE POWERFUL SOUTH HESSEN DISTRICT ORGANIZATION OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SPD), SUCCEEDING MINISTER-PRESIDENT OSSWALD, WHO WAS NOT NOMINATED FOR RE-ELECTION TO THE PARTY POST FOLLOWING SPD LOSSES IN THE 1974 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS. THE LEFTIST
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MAJORITY OF THE SOUTH HESSEN SPD WAS MORE CLEARLY

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DEMONSTRATED BY THE ONE-VOTE VICTORY OF LEFTIST TRADE UNION FUNCTIONARY GRET LUETGERT FOR THE DEPUTY CHAIRMANSHIP OVER FINANCE MINISTER REITZ, WHO HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF PERSONALITY AND PUBLIC STATURE. AFTER SCHMIDT AND REITZ THREATENED TO RESIGN IF QUOTE BALANCE UNQUOTE WAS NOT RESTORED, THE CONVENTION ELECTED FIVE RIGHT-WINGERS TO THE 16-MEMBER POLICY BOARD, ONE MORE THAN BEFORE.

2. THE CONVENTION UNANIMOUSLY EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL RESERACH MINISTER MATTHOEFER'S PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF THE CHILE JUNTA AS A QUOTE GANG OF MURDERS UNQUOTE AND DENOUNCED DEFESE MINISTER LEBER'S SYMPATHETIC APPROACH TO U.S. VIETNAM POLICY IN THE RECENT FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ARTICLE. LEBER'S RENOMINATION TO HIS FRANKFURT BUNDESTAG CONSTITUENCY MAY BE THREATENED. END SUMMARY.

3. THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE SOUTH HESSEN SPD DISTRICT ORGNAIZATION, THE SECOND LARGEST IN THE FRG, WAS HELD IN TAUNUSSTEIN APRIL 11-12. PRINCIPAL ATTENTION WAS FOCUSED ON THE CONTESTS FOR PARTY OFFICE. AS REPORTED REFTEL, FRANKFURT LOARD MAYOR RUDI ARNDT HAD ANNOUNCED UPON COMPLETION OF THE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS IN EARLY DECEMBER THAT HE WOULD BE A CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED MINISTER-PRESIDENT OSSWALD, WHO HAD BEEN DISTRICT SPD CHAIRMAN FOR EIGHT YEARS. WHEN ARNDT WAS CRITICIZED FOR KICKING A MAN WHO WAS DOWN, A MAN WHO DID NOT BEAR SOLE BLAME FOR THE PARTY'S LOSSES IN THE LANDTAG ELECTIONS OR FOR THE CONCESSIONS MADE TO THE FDP TO PRESERVE THE COALITION, ARNDT SAID HE WOULD NOT RUN AGAINST OSSWALD BUT ONLY IN PLACE OF HIM. THE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE BOARD IN MID-FEBRUARY FORMALLY NOMINATED ARNDT AS CHAIRMAN AND METALWORKERS UNION FUNCTIONARY GERT LEUTGERT, A JUSO FAVORITE, TO SUCCEED HIM AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (THUS STRIPPING OSSWALD OF ALL LOCAL PARTY OFFICES EXCEPT THE TITULAR POSITION OF HESSEN SPD CHAIRMAN).

4. DENOUNCING THE NOMINATIONS AS QUOTE ONE-SIDED UNQUOTE AND A QUOTE LEFTIST TICKET TO FURTHER LOSSES AT THE POLLS, UNQUOTE SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER HORST
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SCHMIDT AND FINANCE MINISTER HERIBERT REITZ, BOTH RIGHT-WINGERS, CAME FORWARD AS CHALLENGERS. (ALTHOUGH ARNDT DOES BATTLE AGAINST THE EXTREME LEFTISTS IN FRANKFURT, WHERE HE CALLS HIMSELF QUOTE LEFT-CENTER, UNQUOTE HE IS CONSIDERED A LEFTIST ON THE DISTRICT AND NATIONAL LEVELS.) THE ARNDT-LUETGERT SLATE WAS ENDORSED BY THE FRANKFURT SPD, THE SOUTH HESSEN JUSOS AND SPD WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION, THREE OF THE PRINCIPAL LEFTIST ELEMENTS

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OF THE PARTY. AS DISTRICT JUSO CHAIRMAN FRITSCHE PUT IT, ALTHOUGH HE DISLIKED ARNDT'S QUOTE STEAMROLLER UNQUOTE METHODS, ARNDT WAS OBVIOUSLY PREFERABLE TO HORST SCHMIDT. DESPITE CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION TO ARNDT OUTSIDE FRANKFURT, HE WAS EXPECTED TO WIN BECAUSE HE IS THE STRONGEST PERSONALITY IN THE SOUTH HESSEN SPD AND A POPULAR VOTE-GETTER. WITH AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF 197 REQUIRED FOR ELECTION ON THE FIRST TWO BALLOTS, ARNDT WON EASILY ON THE FIRST BALLOT WITH 213 VOTES. HE TOLD THE PRESS LATER THAT IT WOULD BE HIS GOAL TO PROMOTE THE BORADEST POSSIBLE AGREEMENT AND COOPERATION WITH THE FDP, BEYOND FORMAL COALITION PROVISIONS, AS THE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE TO CDU/CSU CONSERVATISM.

5. MANY OBSERVERS HAD SEEN A CHANCE THAT THE DELEGATES WOULD DECIDE TO INTRODUCE BALANCE INTO THE TOP POSITIONS BY ELECTING REITZ INSTEAD OF LUETGERT. REITZ HAS THE STRONGER PERSONALITY, IS A PUBLIC FIGURE AND A MORE EXPERIENCED POLITICAN. HE IS THE REAL LEADER OF THE RIGHT WING, RATHER THAN SCHMIDT. (REITZ AND ARNDT DO NOT GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER, AND THE DELEGATES MIGHT HAVE REALIZED THAT THEY COULD NOT FORM AN EFFECTIVE TEAM.) ON THE FIRST BALLOT REITZ RECEIVED 190 VOTES AND LUETGERT 196, ONE SHORT OF THE NECESSARY MAJORITY. ON THE SECOND BALLOT BOTH CANDIDATES RECEIVED 194. ON THE THIRD BALLOT, WHEN A SIMPLE PLURALITY IS SUFFICIENT, LUETGERT WON BY THE SMALLEST OF MARGINS, 193-192.

6 THE RIGHT WING CAUCUSED AND SPREAD WORD AMONG THE DELEGATES THAT, IF THEY WERE NOT COMPENSATED FOR THE LEFTISTS' SWEEP OF THE TOW TOP OFFICES, SCHMIDT AND REITZ AND THEIR FRIENDS WOULD REFUSE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SERVE ON THE 16-MEMBER POLICY BOARD, THUS DESTROYING ITS REPRESENTATIVE NATURE. REITZ AND SCHMIDT WERE ELECTED WITH ABSOLUTE MAJORITIES ON THE FIRST BALLOT, AN IMPORVEMENT COMPARED TO THE PAST TWO YEARS WHEN THEY WERE CHOSEN ON THE THIRD BALLOT. HOWEVER, SCHMIDT WENT TO THE MICROPHONE AND INFORMED THE CONVENTION THAT THE BALANCE WAS STILL NOT ADEQUATE. ON THE SECOND BALLOT ONLY ERWIN HORN, WHO IS AT LEAST A MODERATE, RECEIVED A MAJORITY. ON THE FINAL BALLOT TWO MORE RIGHTISTS WERE ELECTED. TOGETHER WITH THE NEW TREASURER, A BUSINESSMAN COUNTED WITH THE RIGHTISTS UNTIL HE PROVES OTHERWISE, THE RIGHT WING NOW HAS FIVE MEN ON THE 16-MEMBER BOARD, AN INCREASE OF ONE. IN LOCAL TERMS, SEVEN WOULD CLEARLY BE CONSIDERED LEFTIST, WHILE FOUR (INCLUDING ARNDT) WOULD BE REGARDED AS MORE MODERATE.

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A TOTAL OF FIVE NEW MEMBERS CONSTITUTES EXCEPTIONAL
TURNOVER. THREE ONE-TIME DARLINGS OF THE LEFT (WOYTHAL,
JORDAN AND VORBECK) HAVE FALLEN FROM GRACE. MOST
PROMINENT NEW COMER IS FRED GEBHARDT, CHAIRMAN OF FRANKFURT
SPD.

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INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 ACDA-05 EA-06 IO-10 /081 W
---------- 012918
R 150837Z APR 75
FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9890
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
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7. THE DELEGATES SHOWED A TENDENCY TO DEAL ALSO WITH
SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS IN PERSONAL TERMS. IN RESPONSE TO AN
APPEAL BY FEDERAL RESEARCH MINISTER MATTHOEFER IN A VOICE
CHOKING WITH EMOTION, THE CONVENTION UNANIMOUSLY
ADOPTED A RESOLUTION ENDORSING HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE
MILITARY REGIME IN CHILE AS A QUOTE GANG OF MURDERS. UNQUOTE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DELEGATES WERE DISTINCTLY DISPLEASED
WITH THE PERSONAL VIEWS EXPRESSED BY ANOTHER MINISTER
FROM FRANKFURT, DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER. NATIONAL JUSO
CHAIRMAN WIECZOREK-ZEUL, FRITSCHE, SPERLING AND OTHER

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EXTREME LEFTISTS TOOK THE OCCASION NOT ONLY
TO DENOUNCE LEBER BUT AGAIN -- AFTER A PAUSE OF TWO
YEARS -- TO CONDEMN U.S. QUOTE IMPERIALISTS, MASS MURDER,
TERROR UNQUOTE POLICIES IN VIETNAM. (IN FAIRNESS TO
FRAU W-Z IT SHOULD BENOTED THAT, WHEREAS SHE HAD
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ASSERTED A FEW DAYS EARLIER THAT THE REFUGEE FLOW HAD
BEEN INSTIGATED BY U.S. AND GVN AUTHORITIES TO ROUSE
WORLD SYMPATHY, SHE NOW ACCUSED ONLY THE THIEU
GOVENMENT OF SETTING THE REFUGEES IN MOTION
TO BRING MORAL PRESSURE ON AMERICANS AND OTHERS FOR
SUPPORT.)

8. BUNDESTAG DEPUTY HELGA TIMM TRIED IN VAIN TO
DISSUADE THE DELEGATES FROM CONSIDERING A RESOLUTION
ALONG THESE LINES, AND OSSWALD LED AN EFFORT TO DELETE
THE DENUNCIATION OF THE U.S. WHILE UPHOLDING THE
REPRIMAND AGAINST LEBER. TO THE SURPRISE OF THE CONVEN-
TION AND THE VISIBLE DISAPPOINMENT OF THE LEFTISTS, A
NARROW MAJORITY OF THE DELEGATES ACCEPTED A MOTION FROM
THE CONFERENCE PRESIDIUM TO REFER THE
RESOLUTION TO THE NEW POLICY BOARD FOR QUOTE REWORDKING
UNQUOTE. IF THE RESULT REFLECTS THE CONSENSUS
OF THE CONVENTION, LEBER WILL BE REBUKED, BUT THE MORE
VITRIOLIC ABUSE OF THE U.S. WILL BE DEETED OR MUTED.
THE DELGATES ADOPTED A RESOLUTION WITHOUT DEBATE CALLING
ON THE FED GOVT. TO DISTRIBUTE THROUGH THE VIET CONG THE
DM 10 MILLION WHICH IS BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO AID
REFUGEES.

9. COMMENT: THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SOUTH HESSEN SPD IS
A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN THE POLITICAL CAREER OF THE ABLE
AND AMBITIONS RUDI ARNDT. MANY OBSERVERS EXPECT HIS
NEXT MOVE WILL BE TO REPLACE OSSWALD AS MINISTER-
PRESIDENT AFTER THE 1977 LOCAL ELECTIONS IN FRANKFURT
AND BEFORE THE 1978 LANDTAG ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, HE
MIGHT PREFER TO TAKE A FEDERAL CABINET POST AFTER THE
1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS OR REMAIN IN FRANKFURT AS THE
POWER BEHIND THE WIESBADEN THRONE. MATTHOEFER, DESPITE
THE FACT THAT HE IS THE BEST CONTITUENCY WORKER OF THE
THREE FRANKFURT BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES, HAS BEEN IN SOME
TROUBE AT HOME BECAUSE OF HIS LUKEWARM SUPPORT FOR
ABORTION REFORM (HE IS A DEVOUT CATHOLIC). HIS
DIPLOMATIC GAFFEE ON THE CHILE JUNTA HAS THE SIDE-
EFFECT OF RESTORING HIS POLITICAL BASE. THE OPPOSITE
IS TRUE OF LEBER'S FAZ PIECE ON VIETNAM. THE FRANKFURT
LEFTISTS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE HIS CONSTITUENCY FOR KARSTEN
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VOIGT, AND THE TAUNUSSTEIN CONVENTION IS A STEP IN THAT DIRECTION REGARDLESS OF HOW THE SPD BOARD REWORDS THE RESOLTION. VOIGT, THE POSSIBLE BENEFICIARY, WHO RETURNED FROM AN IVP TRIP TO THE U.S. THE DAY BEFORE THE CONVENTION, DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE DEBATE ON VIETNAM. HE PREDICTED TO US PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, THAT LEBER WOULD NOT BE RENOMINATED FOR HIS FRANKFURT SEAT. (AN EFFORT IS UNDERWAY TO PERSUADE LEBER TO RUN ONLY ON THE INDIRECT RESERVE LIST, WHERE HIS GREATER SUPPORT IN THE REST OF HESSEN COULD BE MUSTERED.) A RIGHT- WINGER REMARKED TO US THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IS GOING TO HAVE TO INTERCEDE WITH THE HESSEN SPD IF HE WANTS TO SAVE HIS DEFENSE MINISTER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, CABINET, HESSEN, PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975FRANKF02437
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750449/aaaabtml.tel
Line Count: 296
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 FRANKFURTS 8075, 75 DECEMBER 9, 75 1974
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <02 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH HESSEN SPD
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006